Met Office

February 2010

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1971-2000.

UK overview

The month was generally cold with only a few brief milder interludes, mainly in the west and south. There were some sharp frosts and snowfalls, especially over upland areas. High pressure during the second week brought plenty of fine weather, but the remainder of the month was generally unsettled. The last few days brought heavy snowfalls across Highland Scotland. Overall, it was a cold month with mean temperatures 1.0 to 2.0 °C below the 1971-2000 normal over England and Wales, and 2.0 to 2.5 °C below over Scotland and Northern Ireland. It was the coldest February over the UK since 1991.

Rainfall was below normal in most areas, apart from East Anglia, south-east England and some other eastern coastal areas where over twice the normal amount fell. Less than a half of normal fell across much of western Scotland, north-west England and the west of Northern Ireland.

Sunshine totals ranged from below normal across eastern England to well above near many western coasts.

A maximum temperature of 13.3 °C was recorded on 24th at Porthmadog (Gwynnedd). A minimum temperature of -19.2 °C was recorded on 23rd at Braemar (Aberdeenshire). In the 24 hours ending at 0900 on 25th, 68.0 mm of rainfall was measured at Cushnie, Westfield (Aberdeenshire). 70 cm of lying snow was reported from Balmoral (Aberdeenshire) at 0900 on 26th. A wind gust of 63 mph was recorded on 5th at Berry Head (Devon).

England diary of highlights

The month was dominated by cold weather with only a few milder interludes, these mainly in the south and west. It was also mainly unsettled with some snowfalls, especially over higher ground. Overall, it was a cold month with mean temperatures about 1.0 °C below the 1971-2000 normal across the south and 2.0 °C below in the north. It was the coldest February since 1996. Rainfall ranged from below average in the west to above in the east, with half the normal amount in Cumbria and over twice the normal in East Anglia and the south-east. Sunshine totals ranged from about average in the west to below average in the eastern half of England.

1st to 7th:

Areas of low pressure affected the UK, although a ridge of high pressure built southwards towards the end of the week. Generally a mixture of dry, bright weather and cloudier conditions with mainly light rain or fog at times, but more significant precipitation fell on 2nd and 3rd. This fell as snow across parts of the Midlands and some northern and eastern areas, giving accumulations of a few centimetres, but was mostly rain further south (22.0 mm at Okehampton, Devon on 2nd). The south stayed mild for the most part, with maximum temperatures of 12.3 °C at Kew Gardens (Greater London) on 5th and 11.8 °C at Plymouth (Devon) on 6th, but the north was colder, with maxima close to zero on 3rd.

8th to 14th:

High pressure was centred to the north-west of the UK, with a predominantly easterly or north-easterly airflow. This led to an east-west split, with much of the east cloudy with showers, mostly of sleet or snow, while the west was drier with sunny intervals and overnight frost. The heaviest and most frequent showers

were in the far south-east on 10th and 11th, with 10 to 20 cm of snow recorded in parts of east Kent and East Sussex.

15th to 21th:

Low pressure again dominated the weather. Temperatures overall were either close to or only a little below normal, with ongoing night frosts. A few milder days in the south, particularly 17th when temperatures reached 9 °C in the London area. Further snowfalls in a few places, mainly over higher ground but especially in parts of the Midlands on both 18th and 21st and in the north-east on 19th.

22st to 28th:

Unsettled throughout with low pressure close by, bringing showers or longer periods of rain or snow to most parts, with some strong winds in the south. Precipitation generally stayed as rain in southernmost counties but places further north saw a wintry mix, with snow falling widely across the Midlands on 22nd, giving 5 cm in places. On 28th, heavy rain in southern and eastern areas produced totals in excess of 30 mm in places, especially Kent. There were also some clear nights with widespread frost and/or fog, particularly the night of 22nd/23rd when temperatures fell to between -5 °C and -10 °C widely across northern areas.

Wales diary of highlights

A cold start with sleet and snow showers. This was followed by a milder interlude, then high pressure became established during the second week. It became more unsettled in the second half of the month, remaining cold with snow at times inland and over higher ground. Overall, it was a cold month with mean temperatures between 1.0 and 2.0 °C below the 1971-2000 normal, making it the coldest February since 1996. Rainfall was generally well below average. Sunshine totals ranged from close to normal in the east to above normal near the west coast.

1st to 4th:

Cold, with sleet and snow showers on 1st pushing in from the north-west. Weather fronts moved down from the north during 2nd and 3rd. Rain turned to snow as they met colder air on 3rd.

5th to 6th:

A milder westerly flow prevailed with showers or longer spells of rain, sometimes heavy, particularly in the south.

7th to 13th:

Generally dry with sunny spells, particularly in the west, but cold everywhere with night frosts. Breezy with a cold easterly wind from 7th to 9th causing significant wind chill. On 10th, a scattering of snow showers moved westwards, but many places remained sunny, particularly in the west. Cold but bright again on 11th, particularly in the west. It was cloudy overnight on 12th but many places had a frost, with -5.8 °C at Sennybridge (Powys). The 13th saw a band of mainly light rain or sleet showers accompanied by northerly or north-easterly winds.

14th to 17th:

The 14th was dry before rain spread into the north and west during the afternoon. Cloudy on 15th with rain spreading south-eastwards. Showers on 16th, wintry at times, but the temperature reached 8.5 °C at Milford Haven (Pembrokeshire). Further rain and snow on 17th.

18th to 22nd:

An area of snow reached eastern areas by early afternoon on 18th, heavy in south-eastern areas. Rain, sleet and snow showers also spread into western parts on 19th, with maximum temperatures of 3 to 6 °C. However, temperatures quickly fell below freezing during the evening, with widespread icy roads. On 20th sleet and snow showers spread eastwards but only small, temporary accumulations resulted. Further rain spread north-eastwards on 21st, turning to snow inland and over high ground. The 22nd was drier with sunny spells.

23rd to 28th:

On 23rd, milder air pushed northwards, with thickening cloud and outbreaks of rain, sleet and snow, the snow heaviest in east Wales. The period 24th to 28th was unsettled but it was milder with the precipitation being mostly rain. Some heavy showers at times, particularly on 27th when a few were thundery.

Scotland diary of highlights

Another very cold and snowy month. The first half was cold, with snow showers at times and overnight frosts, although there was a brief milder interlude in the first week. The second half of the month became very cold with locally severe frosts, and the month ended with persistent and heavy snowfalls. Overall it was a cold month, with mean temperatures typically 2.0 to 2.5 °C below the 1971-2000 normal. It was the coldest February since 1986. The number of days with air frost was the highest for February since 1986. Rainfall ranged from below average across the west, where less than half the normal amount was recorded, to above average along eastern coasts with over twice the normal in places. Sunshine totals were generally close to average but it was sunnier than normal along much of the west coast.

1st to 3rd:

The 1st saw snow showers over Shetland and the north at first, with rain spreading to most parts during the day. On 2nd, rain in the Central Belt and the south turned to snow before clearing southwards. This was followed by snow showers in the north and north-east. These died out on 3rd with a band of snow moving north-eastwards during late afternoon and evening, heaviest in the west.

4th to 7th:

The 4th was brighter, but patchy rain reached the south-west early in the afternoon and edged northwards through the rest of the day. The 5th was a mostly cloudy day with occasional rain and drizzle, but mild, with 9.0 °C at Machrihanish (Argyll and Bute). Mostly cloudy on 6th and 7th with rain and drizzle over eastern Scotland, but drier and brighter further west.

8th to 17th:

The period 8th to 10th was bright with sunny intervals and scattered wintry showers, mainly in the north, and overnight frosts. A bright, frosty start on 11th and 12th but cloudy later with patchy rain in the north. The 13th was mostly dry but rather cloudy with light rain in the north-west. Mostly cloudy again on 14th with patchy light rain. Rain, heavy for a time, moved eastwards during morning of 15th but brighter conditions followed with showers in the west in the afternoon. A band of rain and snow moved north-eastwards across Aberdeenshire and Moray on 16th, and it was brighter elsewhere with scattered showers. Rain and snow in the north edged away through 17th, with fog reluctant to clear through central parts and sunny spells with coastal wintry showers elsewhere.

18th to 23rd:

Long sunny or clear spells across many inland parts from 18th to 23rd, with very severe frosts across the Highlands. Braemar (Aberdeenshire) recorded a minimum temperature of -19.2 °C on 23rd. However, wintry showers affected coastal areas, with significant snow across Galloway on 21st and 21 cm of lying snow recorded at Lerwick (Shetland), which fell over 22nd and 23rd.

24th to 28th:

The 24th and 25th were mainly cloudy with persistent and heavy snow, especially across the Highlands, Perthshire and western Aberdeenshire. There was rain near the coasts, with 25.0 mm recorded at Dyce (Aberdeenshire) on 24th followed by 33.2 mm on 25th. Lying snow drifted in the strong north-easterly winds with gales for the Western Isles. Aviemore (Highland) recorded 44 cm at 0900 on 25th. The 26th and 27th saw further outbreaks of snow, mainly across central and southern Scotland, slowly dying out. The 28th saw sunny spells and wintry showers.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

A cold month with frosts and some snow. The first week was rather cloudy with outbreaks of rain, sleet and snow. The second week was dry and settled but remained cold with overnight frosts. The rest of the month was more unsettled, with some snow and further overnight frosts. Overall, it was a cold month with mean temperatures typically 2.0 to 2.5 °C below the 1971-2000 normal. It was the coldest February since 1986 and the equal eighth coldest in a series from 1910. The number of air frosts was the highest for February since 1996. Rainfall ranged from close to average in the east to well below average in the west. Sunshine totals were close to normal.

1st to 5th:

Coastal showers at first on 1st, then cloud and patchy rain spread eastwards. Cloudy on 2nd with morning rain, but becoming dry by early afternoon. A dry start on 3rd but a band of rain and snow moved north-eastwards, clearing during the evening. Dry at first on 4th, otherwise cloudy and milder with outbreaks of rain. Overnight rain cleared northwards during morning of 5th, then dry and bright with temperatures reaching 10.0 °C at St Angelo (County Fermanagh).

6th to 13th:

Some patchy rain over County Down and County Antrim on morning of 6th, otherwise 6th and 7th were dry with a few brighter interludes, but colder. The 8th was dry and bright apart from a few light showers in the east. The period 9th to 13th was dry, with long sunny spells and overnight frosts.

14th to 16th:

The 14th was rather cloudy with some patchy light rain. The 15th was mostly cloudy with rain followed by brighter, showery conditions. The 16th was mainly dry but fairly cloudy.

17th to 28th:

Heavy snow showers affected County Fermanagh and County Tyrone through the morning of 17th, otherwise it was a bright but rather cloudy day with a few wintry showers and fog patches. Frosty nights on 18th and 19th with patchy fog, otherwise bright with wintry showers, these mostly affecting the north and west. Wintry showers around the coast on 20th, elsewhere mainly dry with bright or sunny spells after a frosty start, with -8.8 °C at Katesbridge (County Down). Snow affected eastern counties overnight and into the morning of 21st, giving local heavy falls, although the rest of the day was fine and dry. The 22nd was sunny after frost and patchy fog cleared. Much of 23rd was dry, followed by sleet and snow reaching the south in the evening. The 24th to 27th were generally cloudy with outbreaks of rain, sleet or snow, the snow falling mainly on the hills, with some freezing fog. Mainly dry with some sunny spells on 28th but a few wintry showers in the west later.

Last updated: 27 February 2013